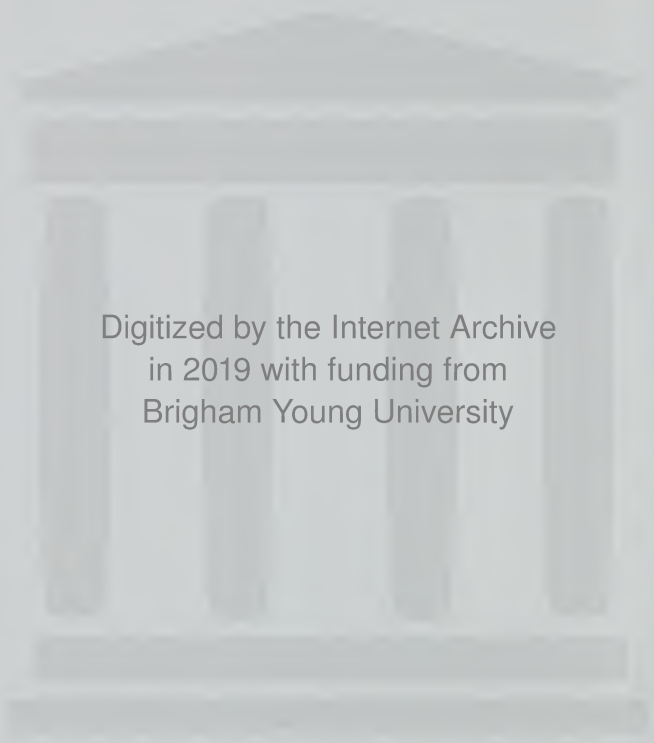


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BOYS' GAMES AMONG THE  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS







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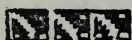
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# BOY S' GAMES AMONG THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS



BY EDITH STOW

*Illustrated by*  
HUGH SPENCER



E P DUTTON & CO  
NEW YORK

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CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INDIAN ATHLETICS . . . . .	I
II. FOOTBALL . . . . .	6
Sea-shore Football—California Relay Football—Eskimo Games.	
III. SHINNY . . . . .	20
Wood Shinny—Circle Shinny—California Relay Games—Shinny-sticks and Shinny-balls.	
IV. QUOITS . . . . .	37
Standing Corn-cob—Throw-six.	
V. HOOP AND SPEAR . . . . .	43
Alberta Game for Two Players—California Hoop and Spear—Pomo Game —Kinxe—Defending Our Man.	
VI. BOUNCE-ON-THE-ROCK . . . . .	64
VII. KICKING-THE-STICK . . . . .	70
Zuni Game for Two Teams—Stick Races—Clown Game.	
VIII. THE TOSSING GAMES . . . . .	82

CHAPTER	PAGE
IX. GAMES OF THE BOWED HEAD . . .	90
The Indian and the Rabbits—The Stone Warriors.	
X. SNOW-SNAKE . . . . .	97
Snow-snake Played on Ice—Snow- snake Played in the Snow—The Push- ing Game—Making the Snow-snake— Method of Throwing the Snow-snake.	
XI. SOME INDIAN WINTER GAMES FOR BOYS	113
Rabbit Club—Puck—Snow-boat.	
XII. INDIAN GAMES FOR SMALL CHILDREN .	123
Treading-round-the-beaver — Grizzly Bear.	

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Treading-round-the-beaver . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
Goals and Ball for Sea-shore Football . . . .	7
Diagram for Sea-shore Football . . . . .	9
Diagram for California Football . . . . .	11
An Indian Football . . . . .	13
Eskimo Football, Game I . . . . .	15
Eskimo Football, Game II . . . . .	17
Diagram for Circle Shinny . . . . .	23
Correct Down-field Play on Approaching Goal in Shinny . . . . .	24
Diagram of California Relay Shinny . . . . .	26
Choosing Sides for California Shinny . . . . .	27
Indian Shinny-sticks and Ball . . . . .	31
A Standing Corn-cob . . . . .	38
Position of Men in Throw-six . . . . .	41
Spear, Hoop and Counters for the Alberta Hoop and Spear Game . . . . .	48
Spear and Hoop for the California Game of Hoop and Spear . . . . .	50
Diagram Showing Position of Players in the Pomo Game . . . . .	52

	PAGE
Diagram Showing the Course of the Hoop in the Pomo Game . . . . .	53
The Game of Kinxe . . . . .	55
The Wooden Man Used as a Target in Defending Our Man . . . . .	59
Diagram for Defending Our Man . . . . .	60
Hoop Used in Defending Our Man . . . . .	61
Playing Sticks for Bounce-on-the-rock . . . . .	65
Circle of Stones for Bounce-on-the-rock . . . . .	66
Boys Playing Bounce-on-the-rock . . . . .	67
Diagram of Kicking-the-stick for more than Two Players . . . . .	72
A Zuni Clown Game . . . . .	80
The Game of Pumpkin Rings . . . . .	84
Spiral for Score Keeping in the Pumpkin Ring Game . . . . .	85
A Tossing Game Played with a Rabbit Skull . . . . .	87
The Indian and the Rabbits is Played with this Board and Stick . . . . .	92
Diagram of the Board for Playing the Stone Warriors . . . . .	94
Playing Snow-snake on the Ice . . . . .	100
A Snow-snake . . . . .	108
A Rabbit Club . . . . .	115
A Gaily Decorated Snow-boat . . . . .	120

BOYS' GAMES AMONG THE  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS







# BOYS' GAMES AMONG THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS



## INDIAN ATHLETICS

### Chapter I.

#### INDIAN ATHLETICS.

**T**HE Indian tribes back in the days when our country belonged to them, spent a large share of their time in amusements and athletics. The Indian boy associated this with the daily life of his village far more than he did tomahawks and war parties. We think of games as belonging to our children and young

people. Our fathers and mothers are too busy or too dignified to enjoy them. But among the Indians, middle-aged braves and married women joined actively in the athletics of the tribe, and tottering old folks played quieter games in the cool shade under the summer trees or around the winter fires.

Their diversions ranged all the way from the most trifling child's play to great inter-tribal ball games at which several hundred players occupied the field. A few of the games that were considered by the tribes as belonging especially to the boys and the young braves are described in the following pages. There is no evidence that any of these given here were brought to the shores of America. They were originated by the tribes on our own soil. Some of them, like Snow-snake, deserve a place among the leading athletics of the world.

In the great Olympic games of Europe, each player enters the contest for the purpose of winning glory and honor unto himself. In Indian athletics, when a challenge passed between two villages or two tribes, if a man

excelled and won the game for his side, the glory of it fell not upon the player but upon the village or tribe of people whom he represented. He, himself, had only the inner consciousness of victory. This is what might be called true patriotism in the world of sports.

When the date for one of their great, inter-tribal games was set, the players went into a course of training just as do our teams to-day. It consisted of practice work on the field and a routine of eating and bathing. This, for instance, was the training of a Cherokee ball player. For two or three weeks before the game he was put on a strict diet. He was not allowed to eat rabbit because that little animal is timid and liable to lose its wits when pursued by the hunter. He was forbidden frog's legs, a favorite Indian delicacy, because the bones of the frog are easily broken. He must not partake of greens made from plants whose stalks are brittle. For some days preceeding the game he bathed in a decoction of rushes because these stand erect. He also bathed in a decoction of crab-apple because the

trunk of this tree when overthrown is upheld by its spreading branches so that it does not actually fall to the ground. He rubbed himself with an eel skin to make himself slippery like an eel and once before entering the game brushed each limb down with the hind leg and fore leg of a turtle because its legs are especially stout. Then, to make assurance sure, he drew on the ground an armless picture of his rivals with a hole where the heart should be. Into the hole he dropped two black beads and stamped upon them. It would be difficult to determine just how much of all this the Cherokee ball player actually believed in and how much was merely a time honored custom, like our tradition that turkey and pumpkin pie should be part of Thanksgiving Day.

Concerning the origin of these games we know nothing. They are all so old that their beginnings are lost back in an unknown past. The earliest legends refer to them. One Indian myth of the Creation solemnly tells that in the beginning when the ground came up through the water, the first-made men and women

spread down a buffalo robe and played Bounce-on-the-rock while waiting for the mud to dry enough for them to start out in search of homes. While we doubt the games being quite so ancient as this, still we are certain that countless generations after generations have played them and found in them the glow of health and the laughter of happiness.

The mighty, onward spread of our civilization, which has taken away so much from the Indians, is gradually robbing them of their games. Those that live near the towns of the white man are beginning to play the white men's sports. But in traveling through back-lying, country districts one comes upon them, still played just as they were back in the days when painted savages roamed the forests of England. The single exception to this is the Snow-boat game of the Iroquois. This can no longer be seen; but if one sits beside some old chief, he may glance out across the winter snow and gathering up old memories from the sight of it, tell you of the great games of Snow-boat he had witnessed in his boyhood.



# FOOTBALL

## Chapter II.

### FOOTBALL.

#### SEA-SHORE FOOTBALL—CALIFORNIA RELAY FOOTBALL—ESKIMO GAMES

**W**HILE some games were played by all the Indian tribes, Football was known only by the Algonquians of the New England sea-coast, by a few tribes of California and by the Eskimos of the north. Since these Indians are so far scattered, they could not have learned the game from one another. Long ago among each of them there must have lived a red-skinned athlete who thought out and taught his own people this game in which the ball is sent spinning along the ground by the feet only.



*Sea-shore Football*

In New England, where it was a game belonging to summer-time, it was played chiefly by the tribes dwelling along the sea-coast. Those were mighty games in which one whole tribe contended against another. A sand



GOALS AND BALL FOR SEA-SHORE FOOTBALL

beach, smooth and level as a skating floor, was selected for the field. At each end of it was set up a goal consisting of two sticks thrust into the sand and leaned slantingly across each other like poles of a wigwam. On the appointed day the young men of the two villages gathered on the beach bedecked in all the hideous glory of their war paints. Their purpose in this was to disguise themselves so

that if during the game any accident should occur to anger a player, it would be difficult for him to identify his opponent and later repay the grudge. For while the Algonquian rules forbade kicking a man's heels out from under him to throw him, they did allow a player to catch his adversary around the neck as a hold-back until he, himself, had kicked the ball. But on the whole the Indian games were played with the same keen spirit of rivalry but with no more disagreement than games are played to-day.

When they had assembled the men, who had come fully armed, unstrung their bows and dismantled their weapons in sign of friendship and hung them up on the bushes along the line of the game. They next removed their moccasins, for they played barefooted. Then they scratched a mark on the sand and standing each side of it, the two villages shook hands across the line. From here they filed to their places on the field, the players of each village ranked twenty paces back from the line, the individual members two feet apart, from shoulder to shoulder, and all facing their home



goal. Between them on the line lay the ball. Outside the range of the players but facing down between them, stood the old man to whom had been allotted the honor of giving the



DIAGRAM FOR SEA-SHORE FOOTBALL

sharp cry that opened the game. At this signal there was a general rush forward, the fleetest of foot reaching the ball first and beginning the struggle to kick it through the opposing line through the home goal. As the course lay

along the seashore it was not unusual for a vigorous kick to send the ball out in the water. The nearest players followed it and then for a time the game changed into a general lubbering and floundering in the waves. Meanwhile, in order to have a share in the joyful excitement of the day, the boys too young to be admitted to the game ran around the edge of it playing shrilly on reed pipes and the women did a hopping kind of dance and sang the glory-deeds of their own particular men. Thus it was a glad day for everybody.

If the dusk fell before the game had been decided, they marked the ground that had been gained by the leading side and played it out to a victory the day following. Then came a big feast, like an outdoor picnic, after which they returned home their various ways through the forests.

### *California Relay Football*

Football, as it was played by the Indians of California, bore little resemblance to the crowded New England game. The California

sport was well-ordered and gave the individual players an opportunity to use skill in footman-ship. There was no fixed number of players aside from the rule that the two teams must be equal. The field was a straight, level stretch of land. At one end of this, two balls were laid twelve feet apart; at the other were set up

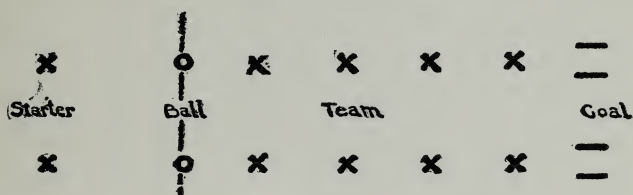


DIAGRAM FOR CALIFORNIA FOOTBALL

two goals, each of which was made by driving two stakes into the ground three feet apart so that they stood upright like the posts of a gateway. The distance between the balls and the goals differed according to the number of players, for the teams were stationed down the track in two parallel lines, the men standing twenty yards apart and the first and the last men respectively twenty yards from their balls and goals.

Outside this formation, fifty feet behind the balls stood the two men acting as starters. At a signal these dashed forward and kicked their respective balls down the field towards the first team-men, following them at a run to give another kick in case the first had not sent them across the entire distance. The first team-men now had their opportunity for individual work in speeding the balls further down the lines. After doing this they joined the starters in running down field, ready to be of any assistance. Thus the teams followed the balls down the track in two ever increasing groups until they were all gathered around the goals where the first to send its ball through won the game.

No handling of the ball was allowed. When a poorly aimed ball made a slanting run across the track into the side allotted to the opponents and so for a time the two teams worked on the same ground, no interference was permitted.

The football used by all the tribes was much smaller than the modern football. They were made of buckskin; or, in later days, of heavy cloth. It is interesting to follow the process

by which the Indians tanned hides and prepared them for such use. When the hunter came home from the woods with a skin over his shoulder, he threw it down before his door. While it was still fresh a squaw laid the skin across a long log and scraped it with a wooden blade or stone scraper until she had entirely



AN INDIAN FOOTBALL

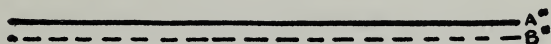
removed the hair. Just as the modern housewife has yeastcakes among her household stores, the Indian squaw kept on hand cakes made of deer brains and dead moss kneaded together and dried before the fire. One of these cakes was taken out, boiled in water and the moss skimmed off. In the solution that remained she soaked the hide for some hours after which she wrung it out, stretched and worked it between her hands until it was

pliable. But it was still tender and easily torn. To correct this she built a slow, smudgy fire over which she stretched the skin on a frame of green boughs, laying first one side and then the other towards the smoke. During this process it changed in color from white to brown, the pores were closed and the skin toughened. If the squaw chanced to have no deer brains on hand she knew that the backbone of an eel, pounded fine and boiled, would answer as well.

Out of such a skin, or in later years out of some heavy cloth, the Indian boy made his football by first cutting a circle ten to fifteen inches in diameter according to the size of the ball he wished to make. This he stuffed compactly with dried moss or small feathers. Since it was impossible to draw up the mouth of his pouch so tightly that the filling would not leak out under the hard usage it was to receive, he overcame the difficulty by cutting another circle two or three inches in diameter. This he tucked inside the pouch and spread smoothly out over the stuffing of moss or feathers, thus closing the mouth of the bag. He then had a ball



C X ..... E ..... O D



A - Lines scratched on snow or ice

B - Players

C Umpire

D Ball when it comes to a stop

E Course of ball as rolled by umpire

A' - B's Goal.

B' -

A'' - B''s Goal

B'' -

ESKIMO FOOTBALL, GAME I



flattened in shape like an apple but very light and easily driven.

### *Eskimo Games*

Of all the Indians the Eskimos were fondest of playing football. With them it was a vigorous, exciting game that kept them warm even when the temperature had sunk forty degrees below zero.

There is a mistaken notion that the Eskimos dragged through the long winter months in a state of idleness. In reality they were among the busiest of the Indian tribes. The summer season during which they gathered their year's supply of food was so brief that every minute of it was precious. If a spear or a harpoon broke during the summer, they could not afford to use the time to mend it. There must be another implement of its kind standing at hand. Consequently the winter months were given to making quantities of tools so that everything would be in full readiness when summer came. It will be easily seen that during the warm weeks no one could waste such valuable time



————— A"

----- B"  
----- E O ..... D ----- C  
----- B'

————— A'

A - Goal

B - Players

C - Umpire

D - Path of ball when thrown

E - Ball

A' - Goal of B'

A" - Goal of B"

ESKIMO FOOTBALL, GAME II

in play. Winter was their season for amusements; and of all sports, the game most loved by them was Football. When the northern lights flashed merrily across the heavens, the boys told one another that it was the gods playing football in the sky. The Eskimos began the game by appointing two leaders, who chose alternately from the groups that had gathered to play until the players were divided into two equal parties. Then two long lines, some distance apart, were scratched on the ice or the hard, dry snow. Each team formed in a line along its goal, facing the opponents. The umpire slowly rolled a ball down between them, calling out in a loud voice, "Ai!" at the exact moment it came to a stop. The two teams then rushed forward and strove to kick the ball across the enemies' goal.

In another variety of the Eskimo game the two teams, instead of being stationed at their goals, began the game by standing in the middle of the field, each team in a compact wall so close together that their arms and legs touched. Down the ten feet of space intervening between

these two walls of players a ball was thrown, which was kicked back and forth from one side to the other until it passed through one of them. This was a leading advantage for the opposing side for, as can be readily seen, they had already started the ball on its way towards the enemies' goal. Immediately the lines broke and a general rush followed until one side succeeded in driving the football across the opponents' goal.





### Chapter III.

#### SHINNY.

WOOD SHINNY—CIRCLE SHINNY—CALIFORNIA RELAY GAMES—SHINNY-STICKS  
AND SHINNY-BALLS

**S**HINNY is still played by practically all the Indian tribes from the hot sands of the southwest to the frozen wastes of the Arctic north. There are games of summer Shinny and winter Shinny; there are games intended especially for the young boys, for the men, for the girls and women. Among the Pueblo and the Mohave Indians of the southwest it is their great national sport. The hours of practice

work the Mohave braves give to it have developed them into the fastest of all Indian runners.

### *Wood Shinny*

Some of the Indian shinny games are intended for two players only. One of the best of these is Wood Shinny, a summer game for boys. A block of wood is laid on the ground. Starting from this point, the two boys pace off fifty steps in the opposite directions and there scratch a long mark on the earth to serve as the opponent's goal. As each is pacing the limit-line for the other, they present a comical sight, stretching out each step to the utmost in order that the adversary's goal shall be as far away as possible from the starting point. Standing on the line they have marked and facing each other, they count together in a loud voice, "One, two, three!" As the word "three" leaves their lips, they dash forward at top speed towards the wooden block. The one that succeeds in first putting his foot on it has earned the right to take deliberate aim with

his stick, as a golf player does, and strike the block towards the goal that was marked for him. As soon as he hits, they stand shoulder to shoulder, count "one, two, three," and race forward again, for the one that first gains possession of the block by setting his foot on it wins the next stroke. So the game is fought back and forth between them until one of the boys sends the block scudding across his line.

For their shinny-block they search along the ground in the woods for a well seasoned branch two or three inches in diameter and cut from it a five-inch section.

### *Circle Shinny*

The Zuni Indians of New Mexico have a shinny game which can be played either with two players or with two teams. From two hundred to three hundred yards apart two circles are drawn on the ground for the goals. Midway between them a basin-like hole about a foot in diameter is dug, in which the shinny-ball is laid and heaped over with a mound of sand. Some outsider hides the ball, concealing

it not in the center but somewhere towards the edge of the sandpile so they will not know in just what spot to dig for it with their shinny-sticks.

If only two players engage in the game, they stand facing each other across the sand mound each with his back towards his goal. If two teams play, usually numbering from four to six

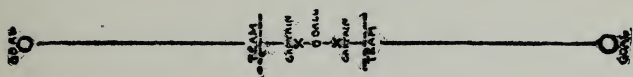
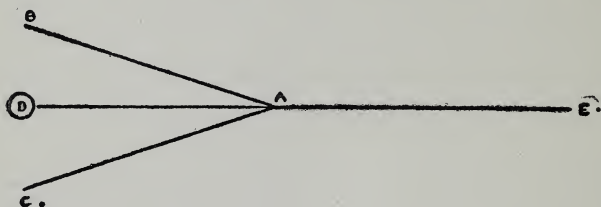


DIAGRAM FOR CIRCLE SHINNY

on a side, they stand in two parallel lines, eight feet back of the captains. Before beginning, each boy scratches a zig-zag line on the ground with his shinny-stick representing a streak of lightning. This they hold to be a kind of good omen, bringing them well aimed strokes. Then at a signal cry for the game to open, the two players or the two captains of a team-game begin digging with fierce haste to unearth the ball, after which the object is to drive it into the opponent's circle. It is the rule of the game that no stroke shall be given the ball while it is



inside a goal circle; that is, when it has rolled inside a ring, the players must wait to see whether it will cross it and come out again into the open country or whether it will stop either inside or on the line of the circle, thus ending the game. If in a hard contest around one of the goals a player has the misfortune to send



CORRECT DOWN-FIELD PLAY ON APPROACHING GOAL IN SHINNY

the ball inside his own circle, it counts the same as though one of his adversaries had done this, giving the victory to the opposing team.

No game comes down to us through hundreds of years, delighting generation after generation of men, unless it is worth while. There must be real sport in it or it will be discarded and forgotten. So Shinny has lived because it offers opportunities for skill and technique.



For instance, the Indian shinny-players have worked out the best stroke to make when two teams are playing half-way down from the starting point towards one of the goals. If in spite of all their efforts, a team sees the ball being driven towards their goal, as at *A*, a straight-ahead stroke from the enemy will send it inside the circle *D*. Under these conditions it would be useless for a player to attempt to turn the ball backward towards the place of beginning, *E*, for this would be like stemming a strong current. If, however, he can swerve its course to one side, as *B* or *C*, he has an opportunity to prevent it from entering the goal and has opened an opportunity for his own men to strike it back towards the center, *E*. In a well-played game, when a team sees the ball being driven down field towards their goal, two players take advantage of this side stroke, while two players of the opposing team follow them to prevent it. This principle of correct play near a goal holds not only in the Zuni game of Circle Shinny but in any similar contest.

*California Relay Games*

The Indians of California have a game in which the point is to see which team can drive its ball down the field with the fewest number of strokes.

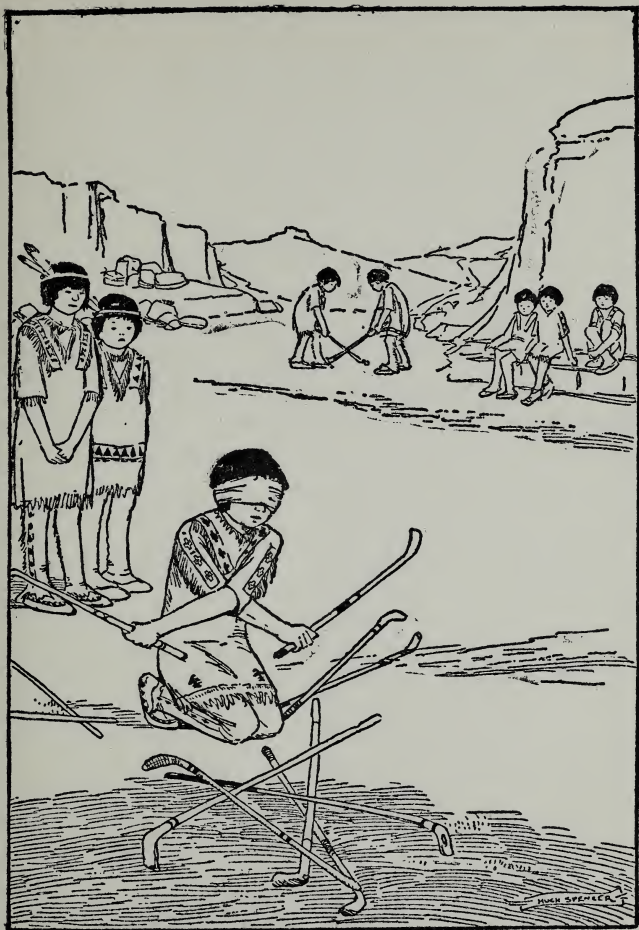
When a group go forth to play, they first divide into two equal parties. To do this, one of them kneels blindfolded on the ground with



DIAGRAM OF CALIFORNIA RELAY SHINNY

all the shinny-sticks before him. He picks up two of the sticks, one in each hand. These he lays on the ground in two piles, swinging his arms dexterously across each other so that his right hand places the stick at his left and the left hand places the stick on the right. The owners identify their sticks and play in two teams according to the division he has made.

A start-off line is drawn on the ground on which are placed the two balls eight feet apart. Beside these the captains take their positions.



CHOOSING SIDES FOR CALIFORNIA SHINNY

Down the field in two parallel lines are stationed the teams, each two men standing five hundred feet apart. The goal line is drawn five hundred feet beyond the last players. Each man is responsible for the section of the track directly ahead of him. At a sharp cry of "Hi!" the two captains strike their balls down the course. If a captain fails to make the distance in a single drive he runs forward and gives the ball another stroke. To keep the score of the game, he counts each drive as he makes it in a loud voice. When the ball passes into the territory of the second man, this player waits until it has rolled as far as it can and has fully stopped before striking, because the object of the game is not speed but few strokes. The second man, still counting the score aloud, sends it down the track to the third player. So the balls are driven from man to man until they cross the line. The team accomplishing this with fewer strokes wins.

This game which has been played by the tribes of California for centuries past, can be either a summer or winter sport. It is especially

exciting when the track is a smooth stretch of ice and the teams play on skates.

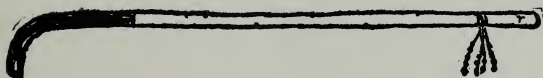
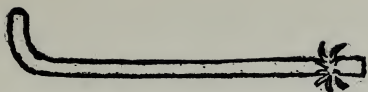
The tribes of California have devised another shinny game in which the object is speed in playing. The party first to send its ball from the line around a stake four hundred yards down field and back again to a hole dug in the starting line wins the game. The teams are stationed in relays down the field, similar to their positions in the former game. After the two captains have opened by a simultaneous stroke, the balls go whizzing down the track from man to man. Now in this contest, when a ball enters his section of the field, the player does not wait until it comes to a full stop but dashes after it and sends it forward. Each player carries a shinny-ball at his belt which he can immediately substitute in case the original ball is lost. No interference with the ball of the opposing team is permitted. If by accident such occurs, a protesting cry of "Hip! He!" is heard all across the field. To this the offending player replies, "He-he-he," which is an Indian apology. If by a foul, one team drives its

opponents' ball down field, the fouled distance thus gained belongs to that ball. There are two spells of high excitement in this game; when the balls are circling the stake, often in opposite directions; and when, in the final rush, the young braves are striving to strike the balls with just sufficient force to drive them safely at rest within the goal-hole. It is sometimes the penalty of the losers to do a solemn dance before their victors.

### *Shinny-sticks and Shinny-balls*

Every American boy is familiar with such shinny-sticks as are sold at the modern sporting goods stores. But those belonging to the Indians are carefully selected saplings bent into shape and gaudily decorated. Some are worked out of a branch having a natural fork or enlargement at one end. The choicest ones, however, are made from a straight sapling of alder or willow thirty to fifty inches long. The tapering end is cooked by being thrust into a kettle of boiling water until the fibre gives so that it can be bent with the hands. Then a





INDIAN SHINNY-STICKS AND BALL

thong is tied in a groove around the tip and fastened with a bow knot into a notch a foot or more up the stick. From time to time as the sapling becomes more pliable under the cooking, it is removed from the water and the thong tightened until the desired curve has been accomplished. Still tied, it is laid aside for a few days to dry out.

Then follows the pleasant business of decorating it. With most Indians, the first step is to remove the bark, though some of them leave a few inches of this at the handle, splitting it up into a kind of fringe.

Often the peeled shinny-sticks are decorated with bands of bright paint; red, black, green, blue, and yellow. One elaborately painted stick from California, which can be seen to-day in the Field Columbian Museum at Chicago, has the outside of the crooked end painted black and its inner side red. Three sets of bands decorate the handle. The first set consists of three bands, red, black, red. The second set is black, red and black. The third, like the first, is red, black, red.



Sometimes figures are painted on them. The design is cut into the wood as a slight depression and afterwards filled with paint. In the United States National Museum at Washington is such a stick, bearing an elk and an eagle painted in yellow, with the striking end colored green.

Still another attractive style of shinny-stick has a small groove cut around the handle into which are tied four narrow thongs or strips of skin. On these are threaded glass beads or quill beads such as would be made by cutting the quill of a large chicken feather into small rings. A knot tied in the end of each thong holds the beads in place. If the quills are first colored, it makes a gaudy tassel which delights its owner's eyes and serves as a convenient handle by which to carry it slung over his shoulder when he starts out with it for a game. The same pride goes into the making of their shinny-balls. The hours an Indian brave spends in manufacturing and decorating his sporting goods are happy ones. In the same way, one of the chief pleasures the modern boy will

find in trying out these ancient games is the necessity for manufacturing his own apparatus.

The shinny-balls range from two to four inches across when completed and are generally somewhat flattened in shape rather than perfectly round. They are heavier than the footballs. For the filling or foundation, strips of cloth or bits of hide are wound tightly. Sometimes this ball is slipped into a pouch or bag similar to the one used for the football, but generally the shinny-ball is covered with two circles of heavy cloth or buckskin sewed together in a seam around the middle. If a ball two inches in diameter is desired, the circles are three and one-half inches across. A four-inch ball requires five and three-quarter inch circles.

These pieces are decorated before they are sewed over the foundation. The simplest method of decoration is to use the ever handy paints. The two halves of a ball may be painted in solid colors, one green and one gilt; or one yellow and one blue. Other balls have the colors put in rings or in the design of a star.

In the United States Museum of Natural History is a shinny-ball which bears a picture on each face. On one is drawn a landscape consisting of hills and trees with an alert, watchful deer in the foreground. On the other side is an energetic turkey walking along with a brisk stride.

The most elaborate shinny-balls are beautifully beaded. A simple design of bright colored quills or glass beads may be sewed to the hide while a small tassel of quills or beads is hung from the center of the ball. The thongs of skin on which such tassels are strung make them able to withstand the hard usage of the game. In rarer cases the entire skin is covered with a solid pattern in colored beads.

In covering it, first of all a buckskin thong ending in a loop, the whole about four inches long, is securely sewed to the foundation ball. This comes out through the seam where the two pieces of covering meet and is used to carry the ball suspended from the belt. The two circles are next laid over the foundation and rubbed down. In olden days thorns or small,

sharp pieces of bone thrust through the covering into the foundation wall, just as one would use pins to-day, held the two halves securely in place while they were being sewed together. Sometimes, by a piece of good workmanship, these meet in an even seam; but more often it is necessary to pucker them slightly to make them fit. An over-and-over or whip stitch is generally used to sew them together; but on some carefully made balls the two edges are neatly trimmed so that instead of lapping up into a seam, they just touch around the ball and are fastened with the baseball stitch.

But not all shinny-balls are as elaborate as these. The small Mohave boys of Arizona, whose people are a peaceful tribe living among their broad cornfields, know that a small green pumpkin just forming on the stem makes an admirable shinny-ball.



## QUOITS

### Chapter IV.

#### QUOITS.

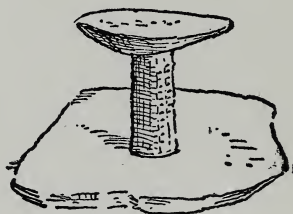
##### STANDING CORN-COB—THROW-SIX

**T**HERE are certain Indian games played by throwing objects towards a goal which recall the familiar sight of a group of American boys pitching horse-shoes and so have been classed under the name of quoits.

##### *Standing Corn-cob*

Every autumn the boys and men of the Zuni tribe in New Mexico eagerly play their game

of the Standing Corn-cob. A corn-cob is cut across smooth at both ends so that it can stand upright on an ordinary flat field stone. On top of it is balanced another thin, flat stone about three inches across. This little column is the target at which the players toss.



A STANDING CORN-COB

Any number can enter the game. Before the real sport begins they determine the order in which they are to play by selecting some distant object, like a tree, and each pitching a stone at it. The one whose stone comes nearest, plays first, and the others follow in the order in which their stones lie. A pitching distance from the corn-cob target is then agreed upon and a mark drawn on the ground. Each player has one flat stone which he skims along



horizontally through the air as one pitches quoits. The object is to hit not the balanced stone but the corn-cob. If a player does this but his throwing stone falls on the ground in advance of the one that was balanced on the cob, it counts him nothing. If the two lie side by side the target is set up again and he has another trial. If his stone falls behind the target stone, it counts one. The contestants play in turn until someone scores ten.

The Zuni Indians have become very skillful at this game of the Standing Corn-cob. It requires both accuracy of aim and the ability to put just enough strength behind the stone that is thrown for it to totter the corn-cob over and then "fall dead," that is, drop to the ground at once with all its force spent.

Some champion pitchers do this repeatedly at a distance of a hundred feet. Such skill cannot be over-valued by the boy of to-day. It means that he has all the muscles of his body under control with delicate exactness. This is a rare educational equipment. Some of the leading professions, such as that of the operat-

ing surgeon, require just this sensitive, accurate, muscular skill.

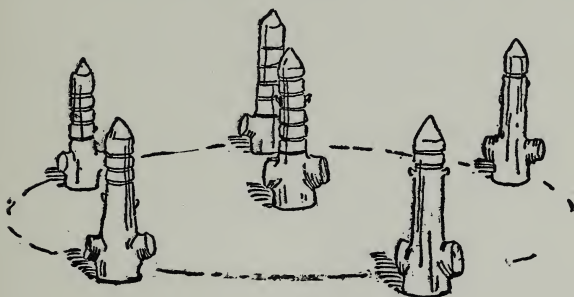
### *Throw-six*

Throw-six is another of these quoit games, which the Indian boys in Yucatan play with enthusiasm. Where a group of them are gathered at it there is always a ringing clamor of voices, except where all the heads are gathered over the game-ring anxiously studying the results of a throw.

This requires six wooden men about six inches high to serve as the target. They are made from the branches of any kind of tree whose twigs grow directly opposite each other. These can be found on most evergreens and on certain other trees, such as the white ash, the striped maple and the sugar maple. Sometimes a branch will be discovered from which the twigs start out in a kind of ring or whorl. This can be used by cutting away all but two opposite ones. A short distance beneath the two twigs, the branch is cut across even to make a level base on which the man can stand upright. The



twigs are then lopped off so that they project sideways in two short stumps, maintaining the wooden man upright with an even balance but lifting the center of gravity so that he can be easily overthrown. The head is whittled to a point. The value of the men, which advances



POSITION OF MEN IN THROW-SIX

progressively from one to six counts, is indicated by rings cut or painted around the stick. These are set upright on a bit of level ground, the one showing six rings in the center and the others in a circle around it, beginning with number one and thence towards the right in regular notation. Each boy has a stone about the size of a crab-apple. Before opening the

game these are handed round among the group to test whether all are approximately the same weight, for the heavy stone has an advantage over lighter ones. Eight to ten feet away a line is drawn behind which a boy crouches or kneels. His purpose is to pitch the stone at the circle in such a way as to knock over as many as possible of the men. He has but one throw each turn, his score amounting to the sum of the rings on all the men he overthrows. The first score of twenty wins.

The stone is pitched against one of the men with considerable force and this, in falling, brings down the others with it. It is when this happens that a chorus of laughter and shouts arises from the group of Throw-six players.



# HOOP AND SPEAR

## Chapter V.

### HOOP AND SPEAR.

ALBERTA GAME FOR TWO PLAYERS—CALIFORNIA HOOP AND SPEAR—POMO GAME—KINXE—DEFENDING OUR MAN

**I**N the old days a level, hard beaten plot of ground was found in connection with practically every Indian village. Sometimes this square occupied the very heart of the settlement as though it had been laid out first and the wigwams and lodges set up around it. Sometimes it lay at the village edge where its border was carefully marked with logs and a shield

of underbrush was piled around it to protect it from the wind. When we learn that these public squares dotting the entire country from the border of Mexico to the frozen north were athletic fields, we realize how important a place sports held in the ordinary daily life of our Indian tribes.

### *Hoop and Spear*

They were especially intended for the various games of Hoop and Spear; for, taking the country as a whole, this was by far the most popular of their sports. From early morning until nightfall some of the braves were on the village game-field. Often a group of men played for hours at a time, rolling the hoop and following it on a run with their long poles. Others stood by, waiting their turn and laughing uproariously at the thrusts of the players. With such constant practice it is no wonder that they were fleet of foot and sure of aim. Aside from extremely rare cases this sport of Hoop and Spear was strictly a boy's and man's game, no girls or women being allowed to join in it.

Any sport that was once practiced so enthusiastically throughout the entire length and breadth of his country, should at least be tried out by the patriotic American boy. Like the boys of past centuries and the Indian boys to-day in untouched, primitive sections, he will have to manufacture his own sporting appliances from materials gathered in the woods and along the creek banks. But he will find these games excellent training, for it was these very games that helped to make the Indian boy into an Indian brave, fleet of foot, keen in all his five senses and steady of nerve.

### *Alberta Game for Two Players*

In learning to handle the hoop and spear it is well to begin with some simple game such as the one still enjoyed by the tribes of Alberta. Two barriers are set up fifteen feet apart. These consist of two or three saplings laid on top of one another and held in place by a pair of stakes driven in the ground at each end. Two boards set upright along the side of the road make a good alley. Inside these barriers stand

the two players, each with a spear. One of them holds a wooden hoop on the inner rim of which is fastened a single bright colored bead. He starts the hoop rolling down the alley with sufficient force to strike the opposite goal and then quickly changes his spear into his right hand. When the hoop has covered about half the distance, the two players, running abreast, follow it. Each plays as soon as he thinks that he is able to estimate the spot on the barrier that the hoop will hit, throws his spear, aiming at this point. Some hurl their javelins downward at an angle. Others, bending as they run, skim them about a foot above the ground. The hoop, on striking the barriers falls on its face, but the javelins have already slid beneath it. In fact, hoop, spears and Indians reach the end of the track at about the same instant. The score is determined by measuring the distance from the bright colored bead to the two spears, for the one lying nearer the bead scores one.

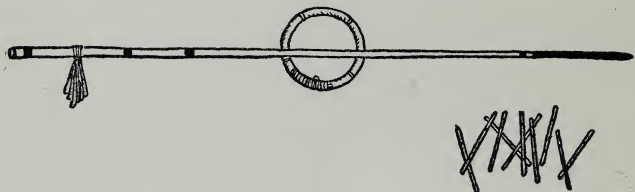
For the second inning they merely turn where they stand and run in the opposite direc-



tion. The hoop is picked up by the player that did not wheel it before. Each stands his spear on end and taps it once lightly on the ground. What they mean by this strange little custom it is impossible to say except that they hold it to be some ceremony that brings good luck. Having done this, they are again ready to roll the hoop and follow it down the track, laughing and shouting with eagerness. For each point scored, the winner picks up a small stick and carries it in his hand for a counter. The game continues until one of the pair has made ten.

To make such a hoop as the Indians use for these games, select a straight young sapling of hickory or willow half an inch in thickness and cut from it a fifteen inch section. About three inches from each end whittle off part of the wood so that when the rod is bent with the two ends overlapping, a perfect circle is formed. It is necessary to do all the whittling from the top of the rod at one end and from the under side at the other. Holding it bent around into place, cut half a dozen small

notches on each side of the splicing so that the cord that binds them will have something into which to catch. Then securely tie the hoop with a stout cord. The Indians used rawhide, deer sinews or a withe made from the inner bark of a hickory tree. Thread a single bright bead on the cord before binding it around the



SPEAR, HOOP AND COUNTERS FOR THE ALBERTA HOOP  
AND SPEAR GAME

hoop and arrange the bead so that it lies on the inner rim.

No single piece of Indian sporting goods is more fun to make than the spear. For the game just described a light three-foot sapling is chosen. It is usually of willow or alder and is sharpened at the tip. The gaming spears are always ornamented, for the red man loves his crude decorations. Also it enables the



owner to identify his property. Sometimes the rods are left unpeeled and a design of bands and crosses is cut into the bark. A very elaborate game spear has six inches of paint at tip and butt and a tassel of buckskin thongs.

The counters are choice willow twigs about five inches long. The Indian is well versed in that branch of knowledge called common sense. He knows that if these counters are made a trifle longer than the breadth of the palm they are a comfortable length to hold. Each player supplies himself with ten, carving them with different fanciful marks.

### *California Hoop and Spear*

The Indians of California devise an exceedingly clever hoop game. Their ring is from only three to five inches in diameter, the thong that holds it in place being wound around the entire circumference to give it weight. On this are strung six bright colored beads arranged on the inner rim of the hoop. Four of them are dark and two are light. Any number can enter into the game, playing singly

in turn. The first Indian starts the hoop rolling down the game-field and then, when it is some three yards ahead of him—that is, is sufficient for him to be able to estimate its course—he leaps about four feet to the right and bending low, casts his spear so that it will lie in the path down which the hoop is traveling. The object is to stop the hoop by throwing the



SPEAR AND HOOP FOR THE CALIFORNIA GAME OF HOOP  
AND SPEAR

spear in front of it. It requires rapid, skillful playing to cast the spear so that it falls exactly in the track of the hoop. The score depends on what colored bead or beads are on top of the spear when the little ring topples over upon it. The light colored beads count ten each. The dark beads score five apiece. If by an extra skillful cast the spear stops the ring so that, instead of falling over, it stands exactly upright against the spear, the player scores

forty, which wins him the game at a single throw.

### *Pomo Game*

Judging from the shouts of laughter and general air of pleasure and excitement that prevails when the Pomo Indians of California are playing their game of Hoop and Spear, it is one of the most intensely alive sports in which a boy can indulge. Here the spear is not thrown as in the former games but is held in the hands. As the hoop is rolled swiftly past the player, he endeavors to thrust his pole through and stop it. If the spear is knocked from his hand it is a foul and puts him out of the game.

Four players take their positions at the four corners of a fifteen foot square. *A* rolls the hoop diagonally across the square to *B* who tries to thrust his pole through it as it passes him. If he succeeds in doing so he remains in the game. If he loses, he first races the hoop past *C* and then drops out. *C* sends the hoop to *D* and *D* back again to *A*. If *B* has been obliged to drop from the game, the course cov-

ered by the hoop changes to a triangle with the three remaining players at its points. When the second player fails, the course changes to a straight line extending between the two con-

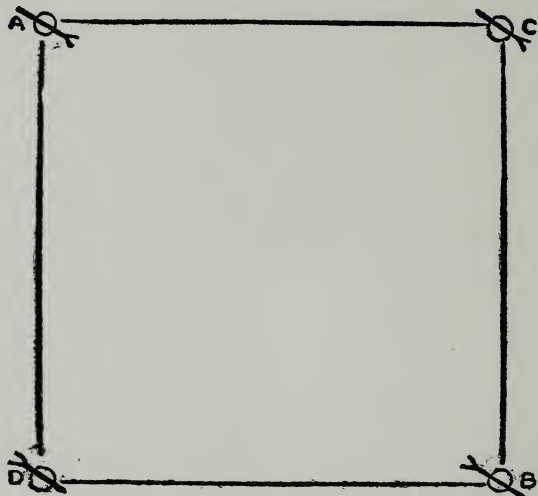


DIAGRAM SHOWING POSITION OF PLAYERS IN THE POMO  
GAME

testants left in the game. The one still remaining when the other three have missed the hoop, wins the game.

Sometimes eight play this game instead of four. Back of each of the first four players

stands a substitute who steps into the place made vacant by the failure to impale the hoop.

This hoop is a large circle about twenty inches in diameter made from a young willow sapling. The pole is from six to eight feet

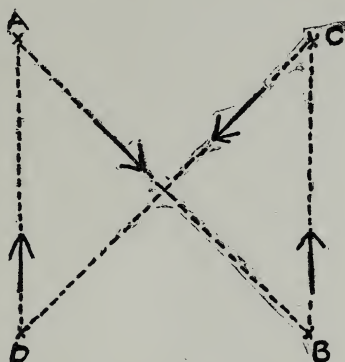


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE COURSE OF THE HOOP IN THE  
POMO GAME

long and is forked at the end to give the player a double chance to catch the ring. This long spear is braced between the body and the upper arm and is grasped with both hands which support and guide it.

Any one who has listened to the shouts of laughter that continually arise from a group of

Indian boys during one of these games, is eager to try the sport himself.

### *Kinxé*

Another game called *Kinxé*, which comes from British Columbia, suggests the flight of a covey of birds. Perhaps some Indian hunter who delighted to creep through the brush and shoot his arrows into a flock of birds when they rose with a sudden whirr of wings, first devised the game to play while the birds had gone south. For just as rise a covey of partridges, some in a blinding rush, some tardy stragglers following, some running distractedly along the ground before they take to wing, so the little wooden hoops are tossed in this game of *Kinxé*.

The players are divided into sides, equal in number. These are arranged facing each other in two parallel lines about fifteen feet apart. Each player has a ring and a spear. The captain of the side that is to have first play cries, "Nu!" as a signal for the start-off and his team cast their wooden rings in the

direction of the adversaries. The object is to confuse the opposite party by the irregularity with which these rings are thrown, just as the hunter is often bewildered by the flight of many birds. The hoops may be hurled in a number of ways. They may all be cast at the



THE GAME OF KINXE

same time. One or two belated ones, on the chance of being overlooked, may be thrown after the opponents are busied with the first flight of the hoops. Again they may be flung in quick succession. A player may throw his ring either by casting it flat through the air as in quoits or by rolling it along the ground like a hoop, towards the opposite line. In this latter case he is obliged to send it with sufficient force for it to go at least half way.



As soon as the hoops have been cast, the contending group breaks forward from its line and tries to catch them while they are still moving along the ground or flying through the air by thrusting their spears through the hoops. The game is won if all the hoops are captured. Each player is allowed to catch as many hoops as possible on his spear. If the entire number is not captured the hoops are returned to their owners and the game continues, alternating from one side to the other, until one party succeeds in capturing all the rings at a single flight.

This game offers an opportunity for good team work. The boys who play it well have the qualities of the superior athlete; steadiness of nerve to wait until exactly the right minute and then the ability to move with promptness and decision.

The spear used in Kinxe is a straight willow sapling from four to six feet long according to the preference of the player. Into the bark the owner cuts some design of crosses or bands to identify it as his property.



To make the hoop, select a slender young willow shoot. While it is still pliable, peel it and bend the tip around so as to make a ring five or six inches in diameter. Tie this in place with some stout cord, first notching the wood to hold the thong. Continue to bend the sapling on itself as a watch spring is wound, occasionally notching the wood and binding it in place. As the willow shoot grows thicker towards the butt, it may be necessary to whittle part of it away. In this way make a flat disk about an inch and a half in width. The Indians then wind around it an outer cover of willow bark or the thin bark from a grape vine. Sometimes they cover it with strips of cloth. This makes a neat, secure game-ring which can be skimmed through the air as a stone is skipped over the surface of the water.

Unless a game is truly worth while it soon dies out. The fact that this sport of flying disks has been played by generations of boys and men of British Columbia proves that it has the lasting qualities of a true sport.

*Defending Our Man*

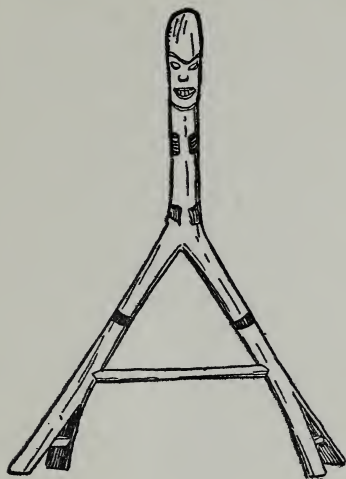
On the prairies of South Dakota the stalwart young braves played a game which they called "Defending Our Man."

The players divided into two equal companies, each of which had a man to defend. This was a forked stick four feet high. The prongs of the stick, which represented the man's legs, were cut across even where the wood was about an inch in diameter. Then, so that he would stand firm, each leg was split up for a short distance and an inch cross-piece introduced. Thus each man touched the ground at four points. A longer cross-piece was braced from leg to leg in order to make the man a better target for the enemy. If necessary the four points of the stick were thrust lightly into the ground to a sufficient depth to hold the figure upright. These stakes were set up on level ground thirty feet apart.

The players stood in two parallel lines, facing one another. Each row began not only ten feet down field from its man but also ten

feet outside it. Thus there was a distance of fifty feet between the two lines.

Each player supplied himself with a spear and a hoop made of a bent sapling. At the



THE WOODEN MAN USED AS A TARGET IN DEFENDING  
OUR MAN

word of command from the captain, one team sent its hoops diagonally across the field at the opposite wooden man, their purpose being to strike and overthrow it. The defending party, as this flight of hoops rolled past, cast

their spears to prevent the hoops from reaching their warrior. "Killing the man" or bowling him over counted one for the side that succeeded in doing it. The sides alternated in

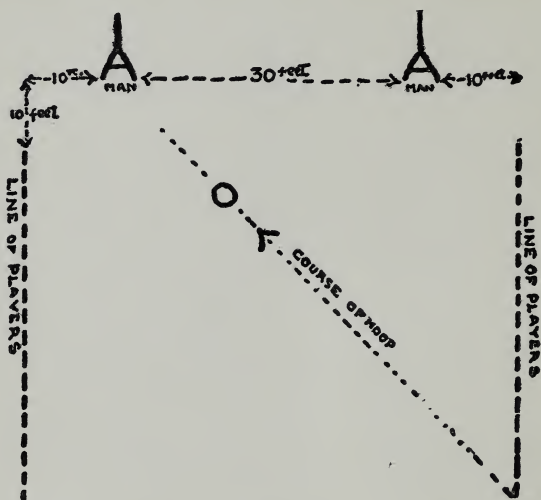
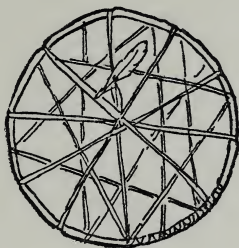


DIAGRAM FOR DEFENDING OUR MAN

rolling the hoops and the party first to score ten won.

The hoop was made of fresh willow sapling about a yard long. Notches were cut at even distances around the circle and strips of

soaked rawhide, the white inner bark of the willow worked down to a thin ribbon, or narrow strips of cloth were woven back and forth across the hoop into these notches in a coarse network. This was done to make a surface for the spears to strike against as the hoops



HOOP USED IN DEFENDING OUR MAN

came rolling across the field. The Indian is an artist at heart and loves his gaudy decorations. No hoop was complete until its rim and network had been daubed with spots of red paint. Particularly choice hoops were further trimmed by attaching a bright feather to the center of the network. It hung suspended on an inch of thong so that it fluttered free in the breeze as the hoop rolled.

The spear was cast much the same as in bowling. It was grasped with the thumb and the second finger while the first finger extended downward along the rim to steady it. The player, holding the hoop at his side, bent low, ran forward six or eight steps and then started the hoop on the ground as a bowling ball is sent down the alley. A good team did not start all its hoops on the same instant but cast them quickly in an irregular group.

The spear for this game was a straight sapling a yard or more in length which ended in a fork or prong. Daubs of red paint decorated the shaft and a feather tied on the short thong fluttered from each prong. This spear was not cast point forward as were the spears in the other games described. The first finger was laid in the fork of the wood, the thumb and second finger grasped it around the shaft, the arm was raised shoulder high and the dart was hurled at the swiftly flying hoop. It was cast in this way with the butt or heavy end forward in order that there would be sufficient weight to strike the hoop to the ground.

In trying out this game, until the players have gained skill in handling their hoops and spear, it is well to station the wooden men and the lines of players closer together than the regulation distance. There is something essentially Indian in the spirit of this game that cannot fail to appeal to the healthy growing boy.





## Chapter VI.

### BOUNCE-ON-THE-ROCK.

IN traveling through the southwest, one frequently comes upon a circle of ordinary field stones arranged on the ground and a group of Indian boys seated around them, intent on a game of Bounce-on-the-rock. The charm of the picture lies in their thorough enjoyment.

They first place a common flat field stone, the size of the open hand or larger. Around this, in a circle about four feet in diameter, they lay forty smaller stones. The circle is divided into quarters by leaving wider open-

ings like gateways, between each group of ten stones. A stick laid in one of these gateways signifies that this is the point from which they begin to keep score. The boys then seat themselves outside the circle, ready to begin.

Every Indian boy down in the great southwest owns a set of playing sticks, made from



PLAYING STICKS FOR BOUNCE-ON-THE-ROCK

an inch-thick sapling of some soft wood like willow or from a firm, slender corn stalk. They cut an eight-inch section and split this into halves, so that each piece has one flat and one rounded surface. Three such playing sticks make a set. Usually they are decorated with bands or crosses carved on the curved side or with lines painted on the flat surface.

The first player gathers the sticks in his hand, holding them either with all the flat sur-

faces turned in or with all the flat surfaces facing out. Bending over the big rock in the center of the circle, he raises his arm a foot or more above it and brings his hand down sharply so that the ends of the sticks strike the top of the rock. Just before these hit the stone he opens his hand and draws it away



CIRCLE OF STONES FOR BOUNCE-ON-THE-ROCK

so that the sticks are free to bounce into the air and fall to the ground in different directions. His score depends upon the way these lie. One flat side up counts one; two flat sides up count three; three flat sides up count five, and three flat sides down count ten.

He has only one trial unless he is fortunate enough to make ten, which entitles him to another turn. The boy who has scored ten, before making his second play, always strikes the bundle of sticks down sideways on the cen-



BOYS PLAYING BOUNCE-ON-THE-ROCK

ter stone crying, "Yak!" This doubtless, is an expression of his happiness.

Each player keeps his score with a small stone which he calls his horse, "because it goes so fast." At the beginning of the game these are placed in the opening or gateway from which the tally starts. If the first player scores one, he moves his horse into the space beyond the second stone. So they play alternately until one completes the circle and wins. There is one rule of the game which adds much to its excitement. If a player whose horse is behind throws the sticks and makes just enough to bring him into the space occupied by an opponent, he "kills" the adversary's horse, which must go back to starting point and begin all over again to work its way around the circle.

This is the way that either two or three boys play Bounce-on-the-rock. When four enter into it, the partners sit opposite each other and keep their tally with a single horse. In this case the horse of one pair of players moves round the circle to the right and that of the

partners to the left. The couple first to work round it three times wins. If a lucky throw puts a horse into the space already occupied by the opponent's horse, the latter must start way back at the beginning.

The groups of Indian boys that gather in some level, shady spot to play Bounce-on-the-rock are so entirely happy that one feels there must be other boys throughout the country who could find fun in it.





## Chapter VII.

### KICKING-THE-STICK.

#### ZUNI GAME FOR TWO TEAMS—STICK RACES —CLOWN GAMES

**T**HE various games of the kicked-stick are to many of the North American Indian tribes—particularly to the Zuni Indians of the southwest—what the great sport of Baseball is to Americans. The small Zuni boy, coming home from the cornfields, kicks a bit of wood before him. Every afternoon, as soon as a pleasant coolness tempers the air, the entire male population collects to practise their national sport. On the crest of the low hills



against the sunset sky, growing boys and stalwart men in groups of twenty and thirty can be seen engaged in stick races.

Sometimes the dusk falls before a game is finished. Then friends of the players make pine torches and run beside them to illuminate their way. This makes a scene of flaring lights and shadows, of shouting voices and the general excitement of a favorite sport.

There are several different games of Kicking-the-stick that are worth trying. In one particular these various forms are alike. There is always a contest between two players or two groups of players, each of which uses its own stick.

Two Indian boys will run together for hours at a game which they play as follows. They first decide on the course, sometimes making it as much as fifty rods long. This may lie down a street or along a stretch of level country at the village edge. Two sticks or two small stone-piles, five feet apart, are set up at each end of the course to serve as goals. Between one pair of these the two players stand

side by side, each poised on his left foot. The right foot, across the toes of which is laid a small stick, is placed a few inches behind, lightly touching the ground. From their position it will be seen that when the cry of "Si!" is given and the little billets of wood are sent up the track towards the opposite goal, what they receive is not so much a kick as a fling.



DIAGRAM OF KICKING-THE-STICK FOR MORE THAN TWO PLAYERS

Just here lies the difference between the successful and the unsuccessful player. The stick that is merely kicked along the surface of the ground stands a chance of being stopped by one of a dozen obstacles. It may strike against a stone lying in the course. It may get tangled in the grass or run its nose into a pile of heavy dust or sand. But the stick that is sent with a low swoop into the air skims along free from interference like a bird, and finally drops with

a gentle curve far ahead. Among the Indians it is no unusual thing for a champion athlete to send his stick a hundred feet.

The minute it has left his foot he dashes after it. His object is not only speed, but to note accurately, while running, where his stick falls, so that he will lose no time hunting for it. He is not allowed to touch it with his hands, but keeps sending it forward with the foot until at last one of the two game-sticks passes between the goal-posts at the other end of the track. Each player carries in his left hand five smooth twigs, which serve as counters. The one that succeeds in first making the goal discards one of these.

Lining up again, side by side, they place the sticks in position with their hands, poise themselves alertly for the start-off, and at the quick cry are off once more down the track on the next round of the game. This continues until one player has discarded all five counters and becomes the winner.

The kicking-sticks, which vary from two to five inches in length, are cut from a sapling

an inch in thickness. Young growth of oak or willow is often selected. If no sapling is at hand, a section from an old broom-handle will answer nicely. It is necessary that each stick bear some distinguishing mark by which its owner can recognize it at a glance. In a hard-fought contest it would be no small matter to make the mistake of speeding the opponent's stick towards the line. The Indians have two ways of marking them. One is to paint them. The entire wood is colored red or yellow, or it is given a band of paint around the center or at the ends. The other way is to leave the bark on and carve designs in it.

### *Zuni Game for Two Teams*

However much fun two boys may have together, the sport is nothing compared with that of a game in which two teams play against each other. Three to six players on a side is considered a good number, although sometimes the teams run as many as twenty each. When two teams are playing, a circular track is preferred to a straight one. A goal consisting of

two sticks or two stone heaps is set up in the plaza of a Zuni village from which the players leave. They make a circuit through the outlying country, enter the village from another quarter, and kick the stick through the same goal from which they started, making a circle of a mile or two.

When it is impossible to have a circular track, the wood is kicked from one goal to another, after passing through which, the teams, without waiting for a fresh start-off, merely return by way of the outside of the goal-posts to the place of beginning. Thus the course is, in reality, a circle that has been pulled out to a straight line. Whatever the shape of the track, the manner of playing the game is the same.

Between the two goal-posts the two captains wait side by side, each with the kicking-stick of his team poised on his foot. Before them, down the track, stand the other players at distances apart, arranged in pairs consisting of a member from each team. The more skillful the athletes, the greater the distance agreed upon in stationing the men. At a signal, the

captains give their game-sticks a swinging kick and then dash at top speed to a position down the line beyond their farthest players, where they turn and keep an eye on what is happening behind them.

If a captain has given an unfortunate start-off kick so that his stick does not pass in front of the first member of his team, he runs forward and gives it a second thrust. If at the first kick the stick lies in front of the first team-man, it is that person's duty without a second's loss of time to send it on down the line. But suppose, as often happens, the captain sends it flying clean over the head of his first man so that it falls before the second. The first, being useless in his present position, races down the track to a place at the head of the line, while the second team-man, before whom the stick is lying, is the one to forward it towards the goal. In this way there is not the loss of an instant of time. To the spectator the little pieces of wood seem to be constantly in the air and the men always moving forward to receive them.



In this exciting, constantly shifting scene it is important for a team to be able to instantly identify not only their own stick but also the members of their party. This is managed by each group wearing some distinguishing article of apparel. Usually those on one side wear a white headband to tie back their long hair, and the opponents wear a red headband. Into the knot that ties these, each puts an arrow-head as a symbol of swiftness. A feather is an omen of good luck to keep the player light-footed.

Apart from these, many also wear a belt from which hang sticks, beads, deer bones—in fact, anything that will rattle and make much noise. These belts are supposed to help them on to victory by preventing them from falling asleep on the track. This is a remnant of the red man's belief in bewitchments. The pale-face that watches one of their games, and listens to the tumult of cries that accompanies it, can see not the least danger of anyone falling asleep either on the track or anywhere in its neighborhood.



*Stick Races*

Just before and after planting-time, the Zuni Indians hold their big public Stick-races. These are the great national holidays of the tribe. The track covered by the racers on these occasions is fully twenty-five miles long. Part of the time it is merely a little sandy footpath bordered by weeds. It winds through rocky passes, crosses cornfields, and climbs hilltops clothed with sage-brush. The player needs not only skill in giving the stick a long, forward kick but also the ability to aim it accurately so that it does not fall outside the trodden path. Only when it lodges in a crevice of the rocks from which their sandalled feet cannot free it, or when it falls in some stream, are the racers permitted to pick it up and put it back in the trail.

Throughout the entire circuit, the teams are accompanied by a great throng of men, yelling with pleasurable excitement and waving yards of bright calico. As many of the spectators as can are mounted on horseback, and the rest

are contented to run along on foot beside the contestants.

### *Clown Games*

Games played by the clowns are another feature of these great Zuni holidays. We have been led to think that clowns are found only under the spread of circus tents, with the menagerie occupants munching and crunching next door, and the vendors crying their wares outside. Long before the first circus ever gathered under canvas there were clowns cutting up such funny antics in Zuniland that their red-skinned spectators literally rolled on the ground with laughter. Like all clowns the world over they send the tribe into shrieks of laughter by imitating what has been taking place, doing everything in the most awkward way. So here is one of their century-old Clown Games, and a truly funny game it is.

Instead of using a stick the clowns have a soft ball three or four inches in diameter, to which is attached a cord ending in a loop. They lie on the ground at the starting line with their

backs towards the opposite goal down the plaza. The loop of the cord is passed lightly around the toes of the right foot. At a signal, they all give a mighty kick that sends the



A ZUNI CLOWN GAME

balls flying wildly over their heads down the game-field. Each then runs to his ball and, assuming the same position with all haste, sends it coursing again down the track.

There is a final scramble at the goal, where many ridiculous accidents occur, for it is no

easy matter to aim a ball backwards over the head and have it pass between two goal-posts. This game is played between two clowns, or two teams of clowns, in exact imitation of the great stick-race that has just taken place.

These slinging-balls are often made of buckskin stuffed with hair, but in the Free Museum of Science and Art of the University of Pennsylvania is a slinging-ball made from an old stocking to which is attached a braided cord ten inches in length.

There is a foolishly happy, rough-and-tumble mood that comes at times to the healthy, growing boy from ten to fourteen. It is part of being a boy. Grown-ups sometimes forget how these moments felt to them and so fail to realize that they are the very happiest ones the boy knows. When the fresh air and the sunshine put something young and care-free and comical in your blood which you know not how to express, just choose a soft stretch of lawn and try this game of the Zuni clowns. It will exactly fit your mood.



## Chapter VIII.

### THE TOSSING GAMES.

**T**HE Mohave Indian of Arizona selects from his field the smoothest, fairest pumpkin and carries it to some comfortable, shady spot. Here he throws it against the ground to break it and cuts and scrapes some pieces of the rind until they are scarcely more than an eighth of an inch thick. Out of this material he makes twelve small rings, the first being two inches across and ranging from this down to an inch in diameter. He now takes a deerskin thong or a piece of stout cord eighteen inches long and after tying a knot in one end, threads it through a small, button-like piece of pumpkin rind which acts as an obstruction

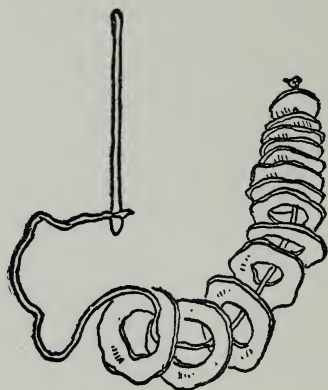
and prevents the pumpkin rind from slipping off. Onto this cord are strung the rings, beginning with the smallest and ending with the largest. Lastly a smooth, slender, pointed stick six inches long is tied to the free end of the cord. He is now ready to find some companion and play the game of Pumpkin Rings.

This is ordinarily a game for two persons, who sit facing each other and play in turn. The wooden needle is held in the right hand between the thumb and forefinger just as one holds a pen except that it is grasped at the end where the cord is tied, thus leaving a long point or spear of wood projecting beyond the finger tips. The string of pumpkin rings hangs down and is lightly held by the left hand. This, however, must be ready to loosen its hold, for it is the right hand that gives the strand of rings a toss upward and forward. Just at the moment the long chain swings straight out—before the player, the wooden needle is thrust forward to spear the pumpkin rings. This requires no small degree of skill. First, one must learn to toss the string outward with a



slow, steady swing; second, one must be quick and accurate to take advantage of the instant in which they lie in a straight line before the needle.

It is rare for more than two or three of the



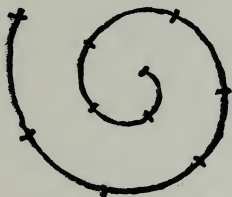
THE GAME OF PUMPKIN RINGS

rings to be caught at a single thrust, although sometimes all of them are. Each ring speared counts one, the winning score being ten. The first player tosses the string. If he is successful in catching one or more of the rings he has another turn and continues to play until he makes an unfortunate thrust that counts



him nothing. He must then pass the game to his opponent who plays as long as he scores.

To keep tally a spiral is scratched on the ground with ten small cross marks to represent the ten points necessary to win the game. Each player moves a small pebble from point to point on the spiral, beginning at the center



SPIRAL FOR SCORE KEEPING IN THE PUMPKIN RING  
GAME

and working outward as his score grows. If the player that is behind makes just enough to bring his counter on the same mark with his opponent's, it "kills" the counter first occupying that point and sends it back to begin all over again. But this does not take place if it merely passes the opponent's pebble.

Sometimes a young Indian brave calls on a maiden of the tribe to play Pumpkin Rings.

They seat themselves tailor-fashion on a blanket or skin and the young man, who has brought the game with him, produces it and plays first. When he misses he hands it to the Indian girl. Then follows an anxious moment for if, after the first toss she returns it instead of continuing until she misses, he understands that his presence is not welcome. But if the little red-skinned maiden tosses happily until she fails, he knows that she has given him permission to come again on other summer twilights to play with her beside her wigwam. For this reason it is known among them as the "Lover's Game."

Sometimes a number of Indians join in the game. When cold weather drives them inside they love to gather in groups. Then it is that they arrange themselves in two rows and play the game of Pumpkin Rings. Sometimes as many as ten play on a side. Before beginning, the winning score is agreed upon, depending on the number of players. When there are ten players to a side the score is generally forty. The string of rings is passed along the full

length of one side before it is handed across to the opponents. A player tosses until he fails and then passes it to his next neighbor. The object is for one side by the united efforts



A TOSSING GAME PLAYED WITH A RABBIT SKULL

of all the partners, to score the full number required in a single passage of the rings down the line. The side first to do this wins.

Some variety of the tossing game existed among practically every tribe of our country.

The sea-coast Indians used the backbone of fish, painted and strung on a cord. Each bone caught scored one, four points making a game. The tribes living in the northern forests used little bundles of cedar needles from the lower end of which hung a flap of buckskin perforated full of holes. The cedar needles merely gave weight to the game-string so that it could be tossed upward with a steady, even movement. Each hole pierced by the wooden needle counted towards the final score. In the hunting ground of the middle west, the game-piece was a clean, sun-bleached skull of a cotton-tail rabbit tied on a thong. So up and down the land, each tribe using the material at hand, they play this game in the summer's shade or around the fires of winter. To one who has never seen the tossing game played, it sounds trivial. But after one has watched a group of Indians at this amusement, has seen the steadiness with which they give the upward fling and the dexterity with which they make the forward thrust at exactly the right instant, one realizes the skill that is possible and the

wholesome fun of it. This game is so highly valued by the Indians that they are more loathe to give it up for the ways of civilization than any of their amusements.



## Chapter IX.

### GAMES OF THE BOWED HEAD.

#### THE INDIAN AND THE RABBITS—THE STONE WARRIORS

**G**AMES on the order of our checkers and parchesi were known by the tribes as "Games of the Bowed Head," because the diagram was ordinarily marked on the ground and the seated players bent over it. Sometimes, instead, the diagram was scratched deep on a flat stone or cut into a slab of wood. These

were carefully stored away ready to be brought out at any time and placed in the center of a circle of players.

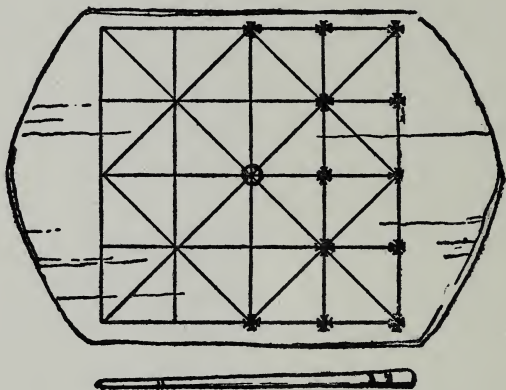
Up in the barn loft where your group of boys gathers on rainy days is a good place to use one of their bark game-boards. When you take one of these out for a Game of the Bowed Head, deep down in your heart you will feel that it looks more at home there than a game-board bought from the stores.

### *The Indian and the Rabbits*

For the Indian and the Rabbits a diagram of sixteen squares and diagonals, as shown in the illustration, is scratched or cut into a slab of flat wood or bark. This is a game for two players. One has twelve kernels of corn or "rabbits" and the other has a pointed stick. This represents an Indian out on the hunt. The rabbits are placed on the board as shown by the crosses in the illustration and the Indian starts from the circle in the center. The opponents play alternately, the rabbits having the first turn. They move only one square at a



time and must work along on the lines. The rabbits endeavor to cross the board and occupy a similar position on the opposite side. The object of the Indian is to jump over a kernel of corn into a vacant space beyond it, as in



THE INDIAN AND THE RABBITS IS PLAYED WITH THIS  
BOARD AND STICK

checkers. This is "killing a rabbit," and thereupon it becomes his. As a player moves his corn safely past the Indian he shouts, "Con-Con, we-la" (the rabbit gets away from the man); while the hunter when he makes a successful move cries, "Au-gala" (eat him up).

For the rabbits to win, they must all cross the board safely.

The game of Indian and Rabbits has this peculiarity. While the kernels of corn are laid on the board, the player holds the stick from the beginning to the end, merely pointing down into the space he occupies. Since this is a miniature hunting game, it is probable that the first sticks used were arrows.

### *The Stone Warriors*

The game of The Stone Warriors is more complicated and consequently more interesting. Here is a chance for scientific playing. Two boys or four boys can play this together for a rainy afternoon or for an entire evening without tiring of it.

The diagram for this game is not difficult to make but it takes time and care. So, instead of scratching it on a flat stone as the Indians did, it is well to draw it on paper, a smooth pine board or a piece of white birch bark, if you are fortunate enough to have any of these at hand.

Make a twelve-inch square, divide it into one hundred and forty-four squares. Then on each side mark the additional six squares and draw the diagonals. If the squares are in one color

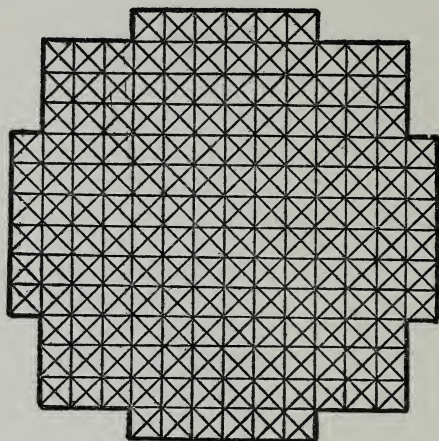


DIAGRAM OF THE BOARD FOR PLAYING THE STONE  
WARRIORS

and the diagonals in another, as black and red, it makes a more attractive board and one on which it is easier to play.

When the game opens each Indian has six stone warriors in the six squares on his side of the board. To determine who shall make

the first move they throw into the air a leaf or a piece of corn husk blackened on one side, as we toss up a penny. The object of the game is to move the pieces across the board and place them in the six squares on the opponent's side of the board, capturing as many as possible of his warriors on the way over. The moves are made one square at a time along the diagonal lines, the warriors being placed in the center of the square on the intersection of the lines. When a player succeeds in getting one of the opponent's men between two of his, the owner is obliged to remove it from the game. The first time a player so captures one of the enemy's men, in the place made vacant, he places a seventh man of his own, larger in size than the others, which he calls "the Priest of the Bow." This Priest, having miraculous powers, can "jump gorges." That is, this piece can be moved along the straight as well as the diagonal lines and can be shoved backward as well as forward. The smaller pieces can be sent only forward. The player who first places all the pieces remaining to him in position on

the opposite side wins. When two play against each other they sit on opposite sides of the diagram. When four persons are in the game the south and east sides play against the north and west.

The warriors are sets of small pebbles, the opponents using colors, as black and white; or they are little flat balls of clay, half of which have a hole pierced through them.

There are many occasions when these Indian Games of the Bowed Head will add to the fun.



## Chapter X.

### SNOW-SNAKE.

SNOW-SNAKE PLAYED ON ICE—SNOW-SNAKE  
PLAYED IN THE SNOW—THE PUSHING  
GAME—MAKING THE SNOW-SNAKE  
—METHOD OF THROWING THE  
SNOW-SNAKE

A WINTER visit among the Indian tribes teaches some exhilarating cold weather games of which ordinary boys know nothing. Chief among these is Snow-snake, a sport in which players compete in throwing long, slender rods over a smooth frozen surface of the



crust or down a long trench made in the soft snow.

All Indian tribes living north of the snow-line know some form of the game, but the Iroquois or Five Nations of New York State play it with such highly perfected skill that Snow-snake as developed by them deserves to be classed with the scientific athletics of the world. Before the first explorers had pushed their way into the forests, it was the Iroquois national game, just as Baseball is the national game of the United States, Lacrosse of Canada and Cricket of England. The best players of the different tribes were sent out to compete with one another as college teams are to-day. Picture the spirit of excitement and festivity that filled a Seneca-Iroquois village when a band of Onondaga braves carrying their snow-snakes came on snowshoes through the woods with a friendly challenge. Even yet the Iroquois each year send their champion snake-throwers into Canada to compete with the Hurons.

On a winter's day the Seneca boy or man who wants a game takes his snake in his hand



and goes through the village crying, "Gawasa! gawasa!" He will call another word if he chances to belong to another Iroquois tribe but his meaning is the same. "Snow-snake! snow-snake!" is what he is saying. And it will not be long before he has gathered a band of players. Two persons or two opposing parties of equal number may play the game.

### *Snow-snake Played on Ice*

First let us suppose that they will play on the ice of some pond or river. First a line is drawn to mark the start-off. Since the player starts from fifteen feet to two rods behind and runs down towards it to deliver his rod, back of the start-off line a straight, narrow path or runway is prepared by strewing the ice with sawdust or ashes in order that the player's feet will not slip. The first player takes his stand at any distance back of the line that he chooses, his snake balanced in his right hand by firmly grasping one end of the long rod between the thumb, the second finger and the forefinger. He swings it vigorously back and



PLAYING SNOW-SNAKE ON THE ICE

forth at his side until it has gained momentum, when he dashes forward at a run. At just the moment he reaches the line he stoops and sends it skimming across the ice. Away it darts with an arrow's speed but with an undulating motion which gave it the name of snake. In the hands of a skillful player it will cover from sixty to eighty rods. This is the work of a thrower who has learned to deliver his rod at the right slant so that none of its momentum is lost. Meanwhile, since much of its speed depends on the smoothness of the rod, the other Indians who stand back waiting their turns, are vigorously rubbing their snakes. In olden times they used for this a piece of skin soaked in some favorite gum, oil or tallow, but in these modern days it is quite as often a thick cloth and a bit of candle wax.

Before beginning a game they decide on the final score, usually some number from seven to ten. They play in turns, alternating from one party to the other. The game consists of a series of innings in each of which only one side can score. This is the party that owns

the rod that outdistances all the others. This snow-snake counts its party one. If two snakes belonging to this side outstrip the opponents', the score is two. Each outdistancing rod wins a count. The game is played until the winning number is reached by one of the bands.

A high degree of excitement prevails during these games. Shouts of disappointment, encouragement and triumph ring out on the clear air. Some tribes add to the interest and excitement by packing a mound of hard snow, a foot high, at the start-off line. This snow bank is made with uneven sides, a long gradual slope towards the player on the run and a short, abrupt slope towards the field. The rod is set free on the crest of this mound, and flies for some distance in the air before it touches the ice. The Chippewa Indians make several such mounds along the course, like the boundaries on a coasting hill, over which the snow-snake glides, each time gaining fresh momentum.

*Snow-snake Played in the Snow*

When played in the soft snow the game necessarily varies. Then it is not unlike bowling, the long groove in the snow serving as the alley and the snow-snake taking the place of the ball. A level, snow-covered stretch of land may be chosen or the alley may lead down a gentle slope to an open space below. In olden days it was not uncommon for the players to make their trench by seizing a small boy and dragging him through the snow, a performance to which the hardy little Indian in no way objected. A better Indian way is to drag a smooth, barked log, a foot to a foot and a half in diameter, through the snow in a straight line. This is repeated until there has been made a hard, packed, icy trough from ten to eighteen inches deep. Three boards nailed together into a miniature snow plough can be used, but this, not having the weight of the log, does not give the same hard, glazed surface. When the track lies across level land, it is built slightly higher at the mouth to give the snake the ad-



vantage of the grade. On either level or sloping land the alley is widened slightly at the mouth and back of it some distance is tramped down and covered with sawdust or ashes to make a safe runway for the players. The rules of the game are the same as when played on the ice, except that after each man has cast his snake down the track, a twig is set upright in the snow just outside the alley and the rod is removed to clear the way for the next play.

It requires greater skill to send the snow-snake down this groove than across the open ice. Unless it is aimed true it will run its nose into the side walls. If it is cast downward at too sharp an angle, its head will catch in the snow of the track and it will stop. Sometimes a snake turns turtle and slides on its back. Again a lump of ice or snow or even an irregularity in the alley may cause it to leap from the track and run wild outside. But whatever the accident, even if the snake slips unexpectedly from the hand in an unintentional throw, there is no second trial. It is the amount of scientific skill that can be put into throwing

the snow-snake that has kept the enthusiasm for it alive through the centuries and has made it the national game of the Iroquois.

### *The Pushing Game*

The Seneca-Iroquois have an interesting game of Snow-snake for two players which they call "The Pushing Game." A line is marked and equal distances each side of it, such as two hundred yards, the players take their positions, facing each other. They play with a single snake. The first player throws the rod towards his opponent, passing him, we will say, by ten feet. This is to his advantage, for the opponent must retreat these ten feet to make his play, thus putting himself that much farther from the line. The second player makes his throw and fails, let us suppose, to reach the first man by a distance of twenty feet. This is also to the advantage of the first player as he now advances twenty feet nearer the line for his next turn. This continues until one gradually pushes his adversary back and he, himself, reaches the mark. When the two



players are well matched in skill, the game sometimes continues for a whole afternoon, one man gradually gaining inch by inch until he stands upon the line.

### *Making the Snow-snake*

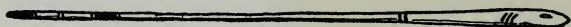
Since the white men have taken possession of the country, the winding foot trails of the Indians have been replaced by broad highways. But they are quick to adapt the thing at hand to their own use. They have found that a straight, well-beaten stretch of road makes an excellent alley; so now, when winter comes, up and down the wagon roads in the Indian villages fly these wooden snakes. The boy who wishes to try the game will have no difficulty in locating a straight, firm line of highway. All that then remains is to supply himself with the proper rod.

The snow-snake is made in a number of ways, varying according to the tribe. The simplest form is a peeled rod of hickory or sumac four to seven feet long, which is thrown with the butt forward.

A still better kind is made by whittling a sapling so that it has an egg-shaped head tapering off into a long wand or tail. Sometimes two dots for the eyes and a line for the mouth are burned on the head and charred or painted stripes are put on the tail. The advantage of this style of snow-snake over the mere rod lies in the heavy head. Any projectile carries farther and truer when it is weighted in front. This snake darts forward with the leaping motion of a rabbit which gives it the name of "bounding slider." Any boy with an old broom-handle and a good jack-knife can make one of these. The eyes, mouth and back stripes are put on with a heated iron and some touches of red paint to give it a true Indian look.

The Iroquois snow-snakes are better pieces of workmanship than those of other tribes. Still they are not beyond the skill of the ordinary boy who possesses a little patience. Originally they were worked out of a sapling but the Iroquois themselves are now making them out of worked lumber. Secure six or eight

feet of inch-square lumber. Ash, hickory and maple are best but any reasonably hard lumber will do. If this square strip is not to be had, saw one off the side of an inch-thick plank. At one end of it lay off five inches for the head. This part, being the most difficult to make, should be worked out last. Whittle the remainder down to a long smooth rod three-fourths of an inch wide and one-half of an



A SNOW-SNAKE

inch thick. This makes an elliptical cross-section. Care should be taken to keep the lines long and even so that the snake will balance well. Therefore it is best to whittle off a little from one corner, beginning at the five-inch mark and working down the entire length of the snake. Then cut away equal amounts from the other three sides. Continue the work, whittling from the four sides in turn until the desired measurements have been secured through the entire length of the rod.

Then measure up one foot from the tail of the snake and draw a line around it with the knife. From this mark gradually taper the wood until it is about one-half inch wide and one-fourth inch thick. Here cut a V-shaped notch half an inch deep, making its walls perpendicular to the ground as the snake rests on it. The purpose of this is to have a groove into which to fit the knuckle of the first finger; for while throwing, the end of the snake is held by the first joint of the first finger while the rod is held between the ball of the thumb and the second finger.

The head is whittled to a shape somewhat resembling a snake's. The speed of the snake and the certainty of the aim are due largely to its heavy head. The Iroquois tribes took pains to weight theirs with lead. Using the point of your knife, hollow out a cavity on top of the head to the depth of one-eighth to one-quarter of an inch. Gather some pieces of old lead and melt them. Two tablespoons of melted lead is an ample amount. Roll a piece of stiff wrapping paper five inches square into a funnel and

fit it tightly over the head of the snake, wrapping several layers of old cloth about it under your hand to prevent your being burned. Hold this firmly with the left hand while with the right you pour the melted lead down the funnel. Before the lead is quite cool, scrape off any surplus with a knife or file so that the entire surface of the head is smooth. You must feel no break from the wood to the metal when you rub your finger across the head as this would impair its speed.

Then dress the whole snake down with a piece of sandpaper until all the irregularities caused by the whittling have been removed and rub with a piece of flannel and some white wax, like a bit of old candle, until it takes on a smooth, glossy surface.

Sometimes, instead of weighting the nose of the snake with lead, the head is whittled out roughly and then held in the fire until it is charred slightly to a golden brown. The charred wood is scraped away, giving the head a more regular shape. This process is repeated a number of times as it is believed to harden the wood and give it greater weight.

The Iroquois treats his snow-snake with the greatest care. Each time after throwing it, he rubs it dry with one cloth and then polishes it with another that has been waxed. When not in use he stores it carefully away where there is no danger of its warping. But it is worth all this attention, for with it he plays one of the most scientific and fascinating games ever devised by mankind.

*Method of Throwing the Snow-snake*

In throwing, the end of the snow-snake is held in the angle made by crooking the first finger, while the rod beyond this is grasped between the ball of the thumb and the second finger. The body is turned slightly towards the right while the snake is being swung back and forth by the right side between the hip and the knee. As the player starts to run the six or eight steps down the track before throwing the snake, he turns so that he faces front. Just before he reaches the starting line he crouches with the feet still in the position of the last running step. They ordinarily plan that this shall be with the left foot forward,



the left knee bent at a right angle and the right knee dropped towards the ground as though about half-way down towards a kneeling posture with it. If the chances of the running start have placed the right foot ahead, this position is reversed—but the approved way is with a left foot start.

When the snake is loosed from the hand and given its start it is almost parallel with the ground and only two or three inches above it. In the games in which it is given a start-off from a small mound at the head of the track, it practically rests upon the top of the mound when it starts. It is loosened in what would seem to be an almost parallel position in relation to the ground, although in reality it is given an almost imperceptible slant downwards by which it grips the ground.





## WINTER GAMES

### Chapter XI.

SOME INDIAN WINTER GAMES FOR BOYS.

#### RABBIT CLUB—PUCK—SNOW-BOAT

THE Indian boy of the past, though his home was only a crude shelter of skins and bark, enjoyed the crisp days of winter just as heartily as does the much clothed, warmly housed boy of to-day. While snow-storms were raging, he lay at home full length on a carpet of dry cedar, gazing into a pile of burning wood and dreaming long, idle half-dreams. Sometimes he played the fireside games of Peach Stones and Straws, or visitors came and

he sat back in a corner, silent and watchful, listening to the talk of his elders.

### *Rabbit Club*

But when the snow stopped falling and the wind had beaten it down to a smooth, firm surface, a dozen pleasant pastimes called him outside. For one thing, the rabbits would now be abroad again and he might get one for dinner. The chances are that he would not take his bow and arrow but instead, would go armed with what he called his "rabbit club." Sometimes the grown-ups among us forget it but the boy knows that it is part of a boy's business to be able to throw strong and true. He knows that in a hard, straight throw that fetches true to its aim, he can feel the joy of living. What boy, then, does not envy the Indian lad the skill to go out into the winter woods with his rabbit club and glance it along the surface of the packed snow with such certainty of aim that he brings home the family dinner at his belt.

Some work went into the making of the In-

dian boy's rabbit club but when finished, it became one of his most prized possessions, preserved from one winter to the next as the ordinary boy saves his skates. It was eighteen to twenty-six inches long, whittled from the stout branch of a tree. It had a bulging, knob-like head which tapered off in the back to a mere rod. This was to give it weight in front which



A RABBIT CLUB

is necessary if a stick is to carry true to its aim. The nose of this bulging head was sharpened to a point like the peak of a top, for this was a true hunter's weapon, intended to pierce furry coats. Sometimes it was prettily decorated. Shallow grooves were cut into the wood in the form of crosses on the head and rings running round the handle, which were touched with red and yellow paint. Again it was given a banded pattern by wrapping spirally round it withes of grape vine or willow bark and holding it in a blaze until the exposed parts turned a delicate brown.

Indian boys played their games in a yearly circle just as we do. Each time winter returned it was the season for rabbit clubs. But when they were brought out after having been laid away many months, it was only natural for the boy to set them to many uses. So it came about that among the tribes a number of winter sports were played with them.

One of the most popular of these games was played on the crust of ice. The modern boy, however, has a good track for it in the shoveled pavements with their smooth surface of trodden snow. Four barriers of loose, light snow, each two feet long, were set up across the track from six to ten feet apart according to the skill of the players. Ten feet behind the first barrier the player took his stand and with movement from the shoulder and the wrist, as in bowling, sent his club gliding along the surface of the ground directly at the first barrier. The object was to send the dart through the entire set of four walls. To do so was to win the game at a single throw. Those who were less successful, however, made a score;

one for passing through two walls; two for three walls. A final count of ten won the game as though the club had been sent through the four barriers. In the case of tie, a play-off was held until one of the contestants sent his club through all four barriers.

It was played either singly or in partnership, the company dividing into two contesting parties. It was necessary, of course, to renew the snow walls from time to time.

The Indian men were especially fond of this game. Growing boys also practiced it, but by some strange, accepted custom it was not considered correct etiquette for the girls or women to try it. They had winter games of their own.

### *Puck*

Quite dissimilar to this was another game played with these clubs. The Crees called it "Puckitseeman" or "Puck" for short. The puck was a stick exactly like the rabbit club but only eight to twelve inches long. For this game a snow covered hillside gently sloping towards a level field was chosen. Down this

they trod with their moccasined feet a single trench eight inches wide and sixty feet long. Having tramped down the track to their satisfaction, water was carried up in buckets of skin or bark and the whole coated with ice. Among some of the tribes the little puck was dipped in water so that it, also, would have a sheath of ice. Some Indian boys hung it on the branch of a tree so that it would crust over more evenly than if laid on its side. Ten feet apart across the trench were set up four barriers of light snow, the first being ten feet from the head of the track. The puck was started at the top of the trench. It was not shoved but began to move gradually downhill from its own weight, gaining momentum and speed.

As the little object glided rapidly down the icy track, great shouts of happiness rang out from lusty young lungs, making an Indian village in winter-time seem as full of pleasure as of hardships. There were two ways of counting the score. One was that the person or party to first send the puck through all four barriers four times, won. By another method



of counting, one point was allowed for two barriers; two points for three barriers and five for four barriers; the final score being twenty. This game was by no means entirely a matter of chance, for considerable skill was acquired in handling the puck. In every Indian village certain boys were the acknowledged champions in this sport.

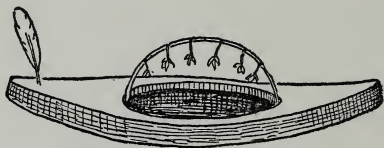
### *Snow-boat*

The Iroquois or Five Nations of New York State, played all their winter games with a skill and finish exceeding that of other tribes. They had a game, similar to Puck, which they called "Snow-boat." This snow-boat was as pretty a little object as Indian hands could make. A block of wood was worked into the form of a canoe fifteen inches long. In the center was hollowed out an oblong cavity whose purpose seems to have been decorative. Bells, rattles and other trinkets were fastened to a wand of willow or hickory which was arched from right to left across the boat by springing the two ends down into the cavity. Then, by



boring a little hole mid-way in the stern and setting upright in it a white feather, they had a device so attractive that it added largely to their enthusiasm for this game.

Snow-boat was played on a hillside with an open plain below. Side by side upon it each player tread out for himself and carefully iced



A GAILY DECORATED SNOW-BOAT

a trench similar to the one made for Puck except that these were about one foot broad. No barriers of snow were set up across them, the course being left open from start to finish.

There was, of course, considerable practice work with the snow-boats going on, but when a real game was announced for a certain day, the entire Indian settlement, men, women and children, gathered in the field at the foot of the hill to witness it. At the appointed hour the chosen players mounted the hill and took their

stations, each at the head of his trench. The snow-boats had been dipped in water so as to take on a thin coating of ice. Often, in order to save time, each player was supplied with three or four boats. At a given signal, all the players placed a boat in position and with a slight shove started it on its downward course. A great shout burst from the throats of the assembled village as the little boats came racing downhill. Cries of consternation pierced the air when a tiny craft swerved in its course and stopped against the side walls of the alley. Shouts of joy broke forth when one of them touched a particularly well iced stretch and darted forward with new speed and momentum. Then, when all of them had stopped, came a breathless moment of suspense while the people gathered forward to count up the score.

Any number from ten to twenty was decided upon as the winning score. The game was played in innings. At each inning but one of the two opposing parties could score. This was the side that owned the out-distancing boat. Sometimes two or three boats belonging

to this party passed beyond the farthest of their opponents, in which case each of them scored one. Thus, if there were four players in each team, it was possible for one side to make four.

Many qualities of the good sportsman went into the making of a champion Snow-boat player. First there was the painstaking care with which he prepared his track, realizing, as do all true sportsmen, that success depends on respectful attention to details. A cool, steady nerve was required when that wild, Indian yell at the start-off was given, for so much depended on his skill at this moment. And yet he had to keep in mind that what he sought was not speed but distance. Lastly, he must have the kind of temperament which failure, instead of discouraging, spurs on to better effort. From the games we play we catch that feeling of the natural joy of living. But they have as well, a deep, lasting value as character builders.



## GAMES *for* YOUNG CHILDREN

### Chapter XII.

#### INDIAN GAMES FOR SMALL CHILDREN.

##### TREADING-ROUND-THE-BEAVER—GRIZZLY BEAR

**I**N every country the children between the ages of seven and ten have a class of games where they circle round in the sunshine chanting some singsong. It seems natural to these years of childhood.

##### *Treading-round-the-beaver*

The small boys and girls of the Ogalala Indians in South Dakota have such a game which they call "Treading-round-the-beaver."

One small person, representing the beaver, lies down and is entirely covered by a gaudy Indian blanket except the hands which extend out from it on each side, the thumb held close to the fingers to imitate the beaver's foot. The others wind round him in a slowly moving circle calling out in their Indian language, "Who am I? Who am I?" As they come near the outstretched hands they venture tantalizingly close to them and then dodge back to escape being grasped. Meanwhile the old beaver snatches blindly in his efforts to catch some of the feet that are passing, until he has the luck to lay hold on an unwary player. Then the whole company must stand still while the beaver is allowed one guess as to whom he has captured. If he calls the right name, these two exchange places, the boy or girl who has been caught now acting the part of beaver.

### *Grizzly Bear*

The girls are allowed to join the boys in this beaver game but when these same small boys grow tired of playing with girls and want some

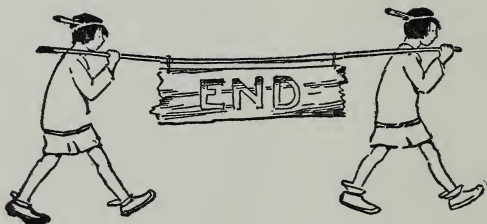
real boy's sport by themselves, they have a favorite game of Grizzly Bear.

Four sticks or dead branches are arranged on the ground in a square as one places the first layer of a corn-cob house. This represents an Indian lodge or house. Inside it gather all the "men." Meanwhile the one or two boys who are to be grizzly bears supply themselves with short sticks which they hold, one in each hand for claws.

From out the shelter of some bushes come forth the bears and cross the grass on all fours, pawing the ground with their claws and filling all the air with their ferocious grunts and roars. The grizzlies approach the house and sniff round it several times, selecting the spot at which they will enter. It is the rule of the game that in breaking into the house, a bear may not climb over the sticks or touch them with his hands. He is allowed, however, to creep under them and this he proceeds to do by lifting the branches with his claws so that he can work his head under them and so crawl into the house.



Just as the Indian boys who are the grizzlies are dragging the last of their little red heels from under the sticks, the "men" with a great shout leap over the walls and scatter right and left. The grizzlies rise to their feet, jump the walls and follow at a run. Then comes a racing and dodging round the bushes, for the one first touched with the bear's claws must exchange places with him and be a bear in the next game.











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